

## Today's News - Wednesday, February 22, 2012

- Linn explains how Leers Weinzapfel Associates uses thoughtful analysis and ingenuity to create a unique exercise in urban design to "make something of beauty" - out of chiller plants.
- Kamin pays tribute to Jacques Brownson, the architect behind the vertical courthouse that "ranks as one of Chicago's top postwar buildings."
- We're personally saddened to learn of the passing of Yoshiko Sato, a rising star lost much too soon: her "commitment was to repairing the world through design."
- Vale delves deep into the housing dilemma epitomized by Chicago's Cabrini-Green that "underscores the central question facing all developers who choose to work at the margins of empathy: How do you protect the property - financially, socially, physically - without excluding the low-income tenants who are the intended constituency?"
- Meanwhile, remaining Cabrini-Green residents face "yet another broken promise" as they're told to leave.
- Russell on the Smithsonian's African American Museum design: it's a bit "too polite," but he can "feel an exuberant Africanness struggling to escape the civic blandness imposed by fundraising, watchdog groups and design review that are part of building on America's most sacred ground."
- Whelan gives thumbs-up to the upper reaches of de Portzamparc's One57 in Manhattan, but at street level, "like a spoiled kid, it wants to be the center of everything" and "will override the rhythm of the block."
- Pitt's Make It Right Foundation heads to Kansas City with a project that "may show the path forward to reusing dozens of empty schools."
- Dvir x 2: hopeful signs of a new life for a rundown Tel Aviv cinema that "could even mark a turning point in the urban renewal of the neighborhood."
- He has a long conversation with Italian architect Cucinella about the challenges he's facing in trying to build 20 eco-friendly schools in Gaza: he's "aware of the deep swamp he is entering, but hopes politics will not hold up his project."
- Brit architect Pawlyn's "Biomimicry in Architecture" answers some of the issues that naysayers raise.
- Then there's the open-source WikiHouse initiative launched by a London-based "self-consciously experimental group of architects and creatives" that may seem "cheeky, experimental, or small-scale" - but architecture "is a field ripe for this kind of mass collaborative innovation."
- Gray thinks it's great that Houston is "getting its groovy back" by finally recognizing it holds a valuable stock of mid-century modern architecture: "In the '50s, '60s and '70s, nobody - nobody - out-moderned Houston," so "eat your heart out, Los Angeles."
- Kamin offers an intriguing tale of a Prairie Style house and cottage linked to Wright and Schindler - and up for sale: "preservationists fear that the homes will be tear-down victims" (or the developer may rethink plans).
- One we couldn't resist: a long-lost FLW design for a dog house finds new life, only to find "the smallest structure Wright ever designed has something in common" with his many grand masterpieces: "It leaks" (Eddie the dog didn't like it, either).
- Eyefuls of the "26 audacious designs" that won the 2011/12 Spark Concept Awards (full disclosure: yours truly was a juror - and totally impressed!).

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**The Big Chill: Leers Weinzapfel Associates' Chiller Plants Reinvent the Art of Infrastructure Work: Thoughtful analysis, ingenuity, and the ability to envision design opportunities create a unique exercise in urban design to "make something of beauty."** By Charles Linn, FAIA [images]- ArchNewsNow

**Obituary: Daley Center architect, Jacques Brownson, 88; his vertical courthouse ranks as one of Chicago's top postwar buildings: Originally called the Chicago Civic Center, the 648-foot-tall courts building was hailed upon its completion in 1965 as a tour de force... By Blair Kamin -- Naess & Murphy; C.F. Murphy Associates; Loeb, Schlossman & Bennett; Skidmore, Owings & Merrill (SOM)- Chicago Tribune**

**Obituary: Yoshiko Sato, 51, acclaimed architect and designer: ...[her] commitment was to repairing the world through design. -- Morris Sato Studio- Shelter Island Reporter**

**Housing Chicago: Cabrini-Green to Parkside of Old Town: ...struggle to find suitable low-income tenants underscores the central question facing all developers who choose to work at the margins of empathy: How do you protect the property — financially, socially, physically — without excluding the low-income tenants who are the intended constituency? By Lawrence Vale [images]- Places Journal**

**Door shutting on residents of last unrenovated Cabrini-Green row houses: Chicago Housing Authority, which once pledged to remodel all units for public housing, now has second thoughts; remaining families told to leave...440 row house units that haven't been remodeled are being closed...For developers, the land...is rich with promise...the row houses are...the last spots of dirt to wash away from the neighborhood. But for the remaining residents...represent yet another broken promise.- Chicago Tribune**

**Slave Receipt, Chuck Berry Headline \$500 Million African American Museum: ...design reveals it to be too polite to capture the tragic and redemptive African-American experience. Yet I can feel an exuberant Africanness struggling to escape the civic blandness imposed by fundraising, watchdog groups and design review that are part of building on America's most sacred ground. By James S. Russell -- David Adjaye; Philip Freelon; Davis Brody Bond; SmithGroup [images]- Bloomberg News**

**The Rhythm of a City Block: A sculptural tower would work in this setting but, like a spoiled kid, One57 wants to be the center of everything. It focuses heavily on exterior texture, and in doing so creates for itself its own, self-contained rhythm; a smooth, watery groove that, when completed, will override the rhythm of the block. By Robbie Whelan -- Christian de Portzamparc- Wall Street Journal**

**Brad Pitt's Make It Right Foundation to help redevelop Bancroft School: A bond forged in storm-ravaged New Orleans between Pitt and a local architecture firm is bearing fruit in Kansas City — and may show the path forward to reusing dozens of empty schools. By Kevin Collison -- Bob Berkebile/BNIM Architects; Tim Duggan- Kansas City Star**

**A new lease on life for a rundown Tel Aviv cinema: From a historic landmark to a seedy screener of porno flicks, Neveh Sha'anán's Hamerkaz movie theater is about to undergo another metamorphosis...Renovating it could even mark a turning point in the urban renewal of the neighborhood. By Noam Dvir -- Avraham Yaski/Shimon Povsner (1956); Danny Rabs- Ha'aretz (Israel)**

**A green school of thought: The architect behind a UN plan to build 20 eco-friendly schools in Gaza discusses the challenges of sustainable development in the Strip...[he] is aware of the deep swamp he is entering, but hopes politics will not hold up his project. By Noam Dvir -- Mario Cucinella [image]- Ha'aretz (Israel)**

**Biomimicry in architecture and the start of the Ecological Age: The book, "Biomimicry in Architecture" by Michael Pawlyn, not only gives examples of where biomimicry has been used, but also answers some of the issues that naysayers raise. -- Exploration Architecture; Tonkin Liu; Ed Clark/Arup; Jamine Benyus/Dayna Baumeister/The Biomimicry Institute; Fluid Structures [images, links]- Wired UK**

**The WikiHouse Revolution: Will open-source DIY architecture usher in a new age of architectural innovation? However cheeky, experimental, or small-scale it appears to be, its open-hardware underpinnings are serious, its principles interesting and potentially important...Architecture — a closed, deeply individualistic field in which buildings are identified by their architects before anything else — is a field ripe for this kind of mass collaborative innovation. -- 00/- Slate**

How Houston is getting its groovy back: ...stock of mid-century modern architecture rivals and, in many cases, beats that of other cities. In the '50s, '60s and '70s, nobody - nobody - out-moderned Houston...aimed to be the place where the bright American future would arrive first...a surprising number of these soon-to-be-historic buildings are not only intact, but in great shape...Eat your heart out, Los Angeles. By Lisa Gray -- Anna Mod; Neuhaus & Taylor; Natalye Appel + Associates; Architect Works Inc.; James Ray Architects; Goleman & Rolfe Architects; Lars Bang; William Floyd; Hellmuth, Obata & Kassabaum (HOK); Wilson, Morris Crain & Anderson [slide show]- Houston Chronicle

Prairie Style house in Wilmette has a cottage linked to Frank Lloyd Wright and Rudolph Schindler, researchers say; preservationists fear that the homes will be tear-down victims...Developer may rethink plans... By Blair Kamin -- John Van Bergen (1927) [images]- Chicago Tribune

Frank Lloyd Wright's long lost Marin dog house: ...the great man was neither too famous nor too proud to design a dog house...for a black Labrador retriever...ironically, Eddie didn't like his fancy new digs...the smallest structure Wright ever designed has something in common with...many of the other grand buildings by the eccentric architect. "It leaks".... [images]- Marin Independent Journal (California)

2011/12 Spark Concept Award Winners Announced: 26 audacious designs have taken top honors [links to images, info]- Spark



FREE Fernando Romero: Soumaya Museum, Mexico City, Mexico

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